

## Changing the Culture of YOUR Company

By Bruce Seidman, President,  
Sandler Training Head Office,  
Baltimore

Your sales department, and your entire organization, has a unique culture. This is a fact of business life. Just as an individual has a personality, a sales department has a personality. This is also true for your company as a whole, which may have a completely different culture than that of the sales department. As the leader, your task is to be out in front, and to shape the mold of the culture.

"What culture would you like?"

Culture can move in many different directions. The garden without tender loving care will be infested with weeds that overtake the beautiful plants and flowers that are trying to grow — that is the simplest metaphor to show you the power of culture.

Would you like to change the sales culture of your company? You can do it without any outside help. Yes, it's easier for an objective third-party to facilitate the (r)evolutionary transformation of your company, but you can move the mountain on your own if you wish to.

### Different Sub-Cultures within Your Sales Department

#### 1. Self-Sufficiency

How do you single-handedly transform your sales team's culture into Self-Sufficiency? Training is one way. A Sales Department Operations Manual, where you capture all company processes like prospecting expectations, the selling process, use of the CRM system, reporting and forecasting, goal-setting, rules and regulations are a must.

Once you and your sales team have collaborated together on the heavy lifting to create this "book-of-process," then every six months the individuals on your team are responsible for keeping it alive... making certain that it is all relevant and not just ink on pages tucked behind tabs in a binder nobody reads... or follows.

Outside training is another way to achieve self-sufficiency. You can try to preach a message to your salespeople, but it rarely



works. Why? Two key reasons: one, you sign their commission checks. They are obligated to listen, but will they feel you're credible enough to follow? Second, you only know what you know. There is a "staleness factor" inherent inside the walls of every organization. Humans don't respond well to "sameness."

#### 2. Awards and Recognition

Salespeople run for money and recognition. Feed this intrinsic human desire by setting up a PERMANENT awards measurement system, based on business sold, in 90 or 120 day periods. Waiting until the end of the year is de-motivating.

#### 3. Coaching

Imagine a "new you," trained by someone from the outside to reach your people in a whole new way; a way where you're not giving out the answers but you're actually laying back, allowing the sales people to come up with their own brilliance. Like everyone who has to learn the hard way by making mistakes, you're going to have to let your salespeople make some mistakes too. Hopefully these "learning" mistakes won't cost the company too much money. The Sandler Rule is: "It's OK to Fail." That's how people learn.

They learn by making mistakes and learning from those lessons. The much stronger, more permanent way to teach someone is to let them experience it viscerally versus telling it to them and not experiencing any learning. Mostly I'm referring to lessons they learn in front of prospects and customers, not behind procedures and processes.

#### 4. Accountability

Another desirable sub-culture is a brand new culture of accountability. At Sandler Training, we follow many precepts and rules invented by our founder, David Sandler. Sandler Rule: "If you're ahead of your goals, you're in business for yourself. If you're behind on your goals, you work for me." A culture of accountability solves that. How do you get a culture of accountability inside your four walls? The short answer is to encourage people to track and count the daily winning behaviours for them to be successful in selling. If implemented, you will have a culture of accountability (a process). However; it is not enough to just count daily winning selling behaviours. People count winning behaviours in all areas of their lives they want to grow and improve, not just on the business side. For example, everybody can relate to the need to exercise. You count how many times you exercise each week, whether it is in minutes, miles or lifting weights.

At Sandler Training, we have a simple methodology for installing a culture of accountability within the sales department. It is called "personal accountability training." One of the cornerstones of this program is behavior change. This is the key. We can change behavior, permanently, with instant feedback mechanisms. We use an online tally system, and since this "virtual tally sheet" is on the internet, people go online to privately track their daily winning behaviours. They count each time they accomplish a behavior, and as the week progresses, this personal accountability tool shows them how much closer they are to achieving their pre-set goal from the beginning of the week.

Sounds time consuming? It requires literally two minutes a day. Nowhere inside this personal accountability system is there a manager, a boss, or a supervisor with a heavy stick.

This is totally driven by the individual. People are much tougher on themselves than a boss or manager could ever be. There's plenty of motivation in doing the behaviors and getting paid, but, there's even greater "attitude motivation" in doing and tracking of these daily winning behaviors. "Character" is building successful daily habits. Sandler Rule: "You can't manage numbers, you can only manage behaviors."

**See Changing Culture (Page 9)**



## Malcolm Fraser (cont'd from Page 2)

SPC: In your estimation, what steps can be taken to improve the province's economy?

MF: One thing more than anything else is vital - establishing a goal of having the lowest cost of government per capita in North America, and working toward that goal.

SPC: How is Halifax positioned to grow over the next decade?

MF: We have an unbelievable quality of life advantage here and that is huge in terms of attracting families and workers to our region. However, all that means nothing if we do not have an economy that is capable of being competitive with the rest of the world.

SPC: Are there things that we are doing right?

MF: By all means, yes. I think that "HRM by Design" is a great example of how we are taking steps in the right direction.

***"The single biggest issue in this region is our resistance to change."***

SPC: Are there areas in which we could improve?

MF: We need to establish a means of attracting great leadership to our elected and employed municipal organization. We can only be successful if we attract people with the drive, vision and skills to make Halifax great. This requires a significant change in our level of civic engagement.

SPC: Should Halifax consider shrinking the size of city council?

MF: There is no question that the current governance model for the HRM is inappropriate. We need to manage the urban requirements of HRM differently than we do the rural areas of our municipality. This means a smaller council focused on the needs of the urban area that surrounds the harbour and holds almost half of the population of the province, and a second council that is focused on the rural areas of the HRM. 🗑️

## Changing Culture (cont'd from Page 4)

### 5. Lifelong learning

This is a big one. When you can encourage your people to learn without you, not to depend on you to push their learning, in all areas of their life, you've got a team of winners. David Sandler had this rule about lifelong learning: "You're either growing or dying. There is no status quo."

### 6. Mentorship

Personal growth occurs in seminars, for sure. Maybe it occurs when people listen to Mp3's and read books and watch DVDs. Perhaps there can be a real leap-frog in learning and rapid personal growth between two people in your sales department. And not just two people randomly paired off, but two people who really like each other and enjoy talking to each other. Peer-to-peer learning is a great thing to encourage. Connect and commit to somebody else, at work, or outside of work, and start growing together. Inside that relationship is an inherent accountability, one person to the other. And that's exactly how these sub-cultures begin to overlap and inter-play with each other. Mentorship with accountability is a pretty neat experience.

### 7. Risk-taking

Sandler Rule: A life without risk is a life without growth. This is one of my all-time favorite Sandler Rules because its meaning is obvious but its execution is not so obvious. Personal growth orientation trumps goal orientation every time. If you're growing personally your goals will follow, but if you're not growing your goals are suspect. The quickest route to taking more risk is to rewire the beliefs that other people have put into your mind and into your brain when you were a toddler or a teenager. Usually it was your parents or other older authority figures that put these certain beliefs into your mind. Just because people told you these things don't mean they're true. Often times we walk around and we live out our whole lives under the influence of those old, archaic, negative beliefs that were never true in the first place, but we believed them as children and we never stopped believing. So rewrite those old beliefs with new beliefs about yourself, stretching you outside your comfort zone.

How do you do that? It takes experienced people to teach you, just once, how to do it. Then you own it forever.

### 8. Goal-setting

Inside your sales department is a hidden, secret culture of goal setting. Sales people have financial monetary written goals etched into their souls. They are naturally money motivated and salespeople can really make a lot of money if they so choose. As long as they are setting monetary goals, let's have them set goals for other areas, too, so they live balanced lives and aren't totally driven by work and by money. How do you do this, how do you have this sub-culture of goal setting? It really is simple. An organization is the length and shadow of its leader. Peter Drucker, management guru, said that. The best leaders are ones who are in the trenches, walking the talk, doing the doing, and serve as living, breathing



role models for their sales people to follow. You want your people to set goals? You set goals. You share your goals with them, and they will share their goals with you. All of the goals: spiritual, marriage, financial, social, health, family, vacation, community, learning, business, etc. can be part of the exchange. Balance is the key to a successful life. Imagine a sales culture where everyone in your organization is sharing their goals with each other.

"What culture would you like?"

You can do all of this. You can change the culture of your company. It all starts with you. Gandhi was right: "Be the change you want to see in the world;" he is so right on. Are people going to feel uncomfortable? You bet! On the other side of that discomfort is their (and your) next growth spurt. When people are growing, they will never leave you and your company. 🗑️